

Letters to Eminent Antiquaries
ON THE
PRIMITIVE SITE AND PLAN
OF
ROMAN LONDON,
THE COURSE AND MEASUREMENTS OF
ITS OLDEST ROADS,
AND THE POSITION OF THE LONG-SOUGHT
NOVIOMAGUS.

BY
WILLIAM HENRY BLACK, F.S.A.,
RETIRED ASSISTANT-KEEPER OF PUBLIC RECORDS, PRESIDENT
OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, ETC.

"O fortunati, quorum jam moenia surgunt!"—VIRG.

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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR JOHN ROMILLY, KNIGHT,
MASTER OF THE ROLLS,
THE FOLLOWING LETTERS,
CONTAINING THE RESULTS OF FORTY YEARS'
OBSERVATIONS AND RESEARCHES,
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY
HIS OLD OFFICER AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,
W. H. BLACK.



Class _____

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DOBELL COLLECTION

LETTER I.

TO WILLIAM TITE, Esq., M.P., V.P.S.A., &c.

“O Tite ! siquid ego adjuero.”—ENNIUS.

DEAR SIR,

When you favoured the Society of Antiquaries, at one of its recent meetings, with an interesting paper, and an extemporaneous discourse on the known sites of Roman remains discovered in London, I took the opportunity of mentioning to you my own idea respecting the origin of the *crooked streets and lanes* of the city, and promised to take an early opportunity of committing my thoughts on that subject to paper. I little expected that we were then on the eve of discoveries, which would demonstrate the truth, not only of that idea, but also of my long-cherished belief of the *original site of Roman London*, formed upon a consideration of the physical

features of the place, the existing traces of its construction as a city, and the principles of castrametation taught by the antients. The former topic now becomes a mere accessory to the latter; and, though I intend to prepare a more methodical paper on the subject of this letter for a future meeting of the Society, I hasten at present to note down my leading thoughts, which the numerous public works now begun or contemplated, in important localities, urge me thus to communicate to you and other my antiquarian friends.

Supposing that the Romans had designed to choose a spot on the THAMES for a city, they could not, on their own principles, have selected one better adapted to the purposes of trade and defence, than the high ground lying between the mouths of two small rivers, on its northern bank, namely, the FLEET and the WALBROOK. Here was a healthy soil, (gravel above clay,) drained and defended on three sides, open to the southern sun, but screened by hills from polar winds, and sloping toward a tidal river, with a natural haven

at each extremity of its bank. They needed only to intrench the northern side for their security from inland attack; for the water and their own ships kept them safe on three sides of the square.

But the work of selection seems to have been done already. The *Trinobantes*, or some other tribe, had already effected a settlement there, if it be true that primitive dwellings of natives, or early settlers, have been traced on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral, or between it and Aldersgate. These, perhaps, were some of the *Belgæ*, who, in Julius Cæsar's time, already occupied the maritime parts of South Britain, as far as the THAMES, while that river formed the boundary of the territory subject to the British King Cassivellaunus. Hence I suppose that those settlers were considered as interlopers or trespassers on the soil of his dominion, and so exposed themselves to attacks, and bore the murder of their petty king Imanuentius, whose son Mandubratius escaped with his life to Julius Cæsar, in Gaul, became his guide in his expedition.

to Britain, and was restored to his father's place. The term *Trinobantes* (in which Geoffrey of Monmouth imagined that he found the fabulous *Troja Nova*) appears to me not the name of a tribe or nation, when divested of its Roman termination, but only that of a *town*; thus, *Trē-ŷn-ŷ-bant*, the "Town in the high place," or, *on the high ground*; that, perhaps, which I have described as lying between the Thames and its two affluents and the moorish land then extending toward the Middlesex hills. Over the moor the new settlers must have made a road or causeway, (something like the *Fossway*,) from Aldersgate to the "OLD STREET," and perhaps farther northward, for the purpose of traffic with the natives; their *port* being at DOWGATE, and their *common* being SMITH-FIELD.

That Julius Cæsar either established a garrison here, or fortified the place in some degree, may be probably inferred from his own words, "*Trinobantibus defensis*." Certainly he exerted himself in some way to preserve

the safety and independence of their *civitas*, whatsoever that word might then mean. I suppose that his *fort*, (if any,) or that of Mandubratius, was situate at or near DOWGATE, commanding the adjacent *port*. "TOWER ROYAL" is yet the name of that part of the city, remarkable for its name, nature, and position, and for its hitherto unexplained relation to other parts of LONDON. Until such a fort was built, (if only an earthwork,) the name of "LONDINIUM" could not have existed; and, when once that name had come into use, in the time of Claudius, we cease to hear of the *Trinobantes*, excepting as a people that then joined with the *Iceni* in their rebellion under Queen Boadicea, and by whom the Roman and other foreign inhabitants of London and Verulam were savagely butchered. It must be admitted that this fact, most distinctly related by the contemporary historian Tacitus, throws doubt on the original connection between the *Trinobantes* and LONDON. On the other hand, there is great reason to doubt whether, in the time of Julius Cæsar,

they could have had any more than a mere settlement on the water's edge, within the bounds of the kingdom assigned to Cassivellaunus. They may indeed, in the mean time, during the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius, and Nero, have increased so much as to occupy a considerable portion of the counties of Middlesex and Essex, where our old antiquaries have always located them.

When this metropolis was first called "LONDINIUM," it lay on the shore of *a great lake*, which stretched, at high water, if not at all times, from Greenwich to Battersea in length, and in breadth from the Middlesex bank to Deptford, Peckham, Camberwell, Brixton, and Clapham; and which received the waters of the Ravensbourn and the Effra. Hence the first syllable of its name LLYN-DIN, "*The Fortress of a Lake.*" The second syllable is obviously *din*, or *dinas*, a fortress. This is the etymology given by Pennant, and approved (I believe) by all later antiquaries among the Cymry: it was also my own, before I saw it in his writings. Some have sug-

gested the etymology *Llong-din*, on a supposition that the name of the city was derived from *llong*, a ship: but the common British word for a harbour or dock is *llong-porth*. In either case, the second syllable implies the necessity of a fort or stronghold; and where should that be, if not at the antient port of DOWGATE, unless the whole place were surrounded by fortifications? That it was so fortified may be inferred from the great population and commerce ascribed to it by Tacitus, although it was "not dignified with the title of a *colonia*," as Camalodunum then was. He calls London an *oppidum*, and Verulam a *municipium*; and he distinguishes both from the *castella præsidiæque militarium*, which the insurgent Britons did not choose to attack. LONDINIUM was therefore a town, a port, a place of merchandise, a fortified place; and was so pleasantly situate, as to have attracted inhabitants by the *loci dulcedo*, before the middle of the first century. That situation, I contend, from the absence of any preventing cause, must have been an inclosed

square, between the three rivers, as before described.

Supposing that this square inclosure was *walled*, let us proceed to investigate the necessary position of its walls. We begin best on the *western side*, where the direction of the wall is free from doubt or difficulty, if the facts be borne in mind that Roman funeral monuments have been found immediately beyond Ludgate. Southward from that gate the wall was pulled down by King Edward I., to accommodate and inclose the Blackfriars' Monastery; and a small portion of the new wall, about 12 feet long and 6 feet thick, still exists in St. Martin's Court, pointing westward to the River Fleet, on the northern side of Little Bridge Street, exactly as shown by Aggas in his Map of London, made about 1560. From Ludgate northward the wall exists, for a considerable extent, behind the public buildings in the Old Bailey. On the *northern side* of the city the wall passed along the Grey Friars, or Christ's Hospital, at the back of Newgate Street, to Little Britain and

Aldersgate, the site of which gate is shown by the parochial boundary-plates upon the houses on both sides of Aldersgate Street. Thence begins a deviation; for the wall at present runs northward, behind the western houses of Monkwell Street, and has a corner bastion between Lamb's Chapel Yard and Cripple-gate Church Yard, where it again turns *eastward*, to Bishopsgate, along the street called "London Wall." But this deviation from the straight line is evidently an extension, made at a later time: for there appears no original cause to justify such a departure from the direct line of a quadrangle; and it seems to have been done subsequently, to take into the city the "Monkwell," or holy well, still visible in the crypt beneath Lamb's Chapel, and to include other early suburbs. Beside, there is evidence that Roman work formerly existed in a direct line eastward from Aldersgate: for Stow mentions *a Roman Tower*, which in his time stood *at the junction of Love Lane with Aldermanbury*, and says that *St. Alban's Church, in Wood Street*, was either

Roman work, or built with Roman materials. These buildings may reasonably be considered parts of the original wall, running directly eastward from Aldersgate to an angle turning *southward along the Walbrook River*; and that name is better applicable to a stream running *along the wall*, than from merely passing *through* the wall, as it did (and perhaps yet subterraneously does) opposite to Leathersellers' Buildings, in the street called "London Wall."

That the original wall actually took that course, *on the eastern side* of the city, may be inferred from the former existence of a *Tower in Bucklersbury*, mentioned by our older London historians, and from the name of Dowgate, associated in locality with Tower Royal as aforementioned. The angle there made, by the junction of the water-lines, leads to the fair presumption that the circuit was completed *on the southern side* by a wall facing the river. It must be confessed, however, to have been a probable conjecture, from the absence of all appearance of a wall on the *southern side*,

even in the twelfth century, that the city lay open to the Thames in that direction. Fitz-Stephen says that the wall had been ruined and destroyed along the Thames by the violence of its waters. But Roman work is not easily destroyed by water; and the Romans were too wise to build where the tide flowed. Both hypotheses are disposed of, by the discovery of a large piece of massive Roman wall, which you once saw underground in *Upper Thames Street*, and verbally described to me at the House of Commons; and which is mentioned also in Mr. C. R. Smith's "Illustrations of Roman London." Moreover, a farther part of the same southern wall is just now laid open, in exact continuation of that line, among the foundations of the warehouses which lately stood at the eastern corner or foot of Suffolk Lane, where Thames Street bends a little southward, so that its northern buildings project over the line of *that southern wall*.

But the recent discovery, to which I called your attention nearly three weeks ago, of

a southern wall higher up from the Thames, and which has led me to review all my observations and notions of Roman London, discloses a most important fact in the early history of this city. Within the last few days the same wall has been discovered farther eastward in a direct line. Hence it appears certain that the southern limit of the older city excluded all the "Hills," or steep lanes, together with Thames Street below them, and Knightrider Street, Fish Street, and Cloak Lane above them.

Thus we have the elements or outline of a *square city*, larger (I believe) than the *Roma quadrata*, the original city on the Palatine Mount; and as large as CANTERBURY or CHESTER within their respective walls, and therefore large enough for all the population and commerce that can be reasonably attributed to LONDINIUM, when it first makes its appearance by that name in history in the first century.

In another Letter I shall notice the internal arrangement of the city, founded on that

which I consider to be the primitive site of LONDINIUM; and I hope farther to show its exact and harmonious relation to the other parts of Roman London, as city and suburbs; subscribing myself,

Dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

W. H. BLACK.

Mill Yard, Goodman's Fields, (E.)

14 July, 1863.

LETTER II.

TO WILLIAM TITE, Esq., M.P., &c.

“Miratur molem Æneas, *mapalia* quondam;
Miratur portas, strepitumque, et strata viarum.”—VIRG.

DEAR SIR,

Two remarkable facts were stated in your recent communication to the Society of Antiquaries, viz., that Roman tessellated pavements had been found at different depths *below the public way* in Leadenhall Street, and that a large gravel-pit, afterward used as a pond and a rubbish hole, had existed close to Cornhill, *below the site of the Royal Exchange*. These facts clearly show that the central thoroughfare of modern LONDON, eastward of the Walbrook, could not have existed in the earliest Roman times, although it leads directly to Aldgate, and to the great

eastern road, of the Roman origin of both which there can be little or no doubt.

But then Mr. Arthur Taylor would have us believe that the earliest London occupied a small parallelogram, to the *south* of that thoroughfare, having Cannon Street and Eastcheap for its central way parallel with the Thames, and having its water-line from Dowgate to Billingsgate. In opposition to this theory, which is ably stated and argued in his ingenious Letters, printed in the 33rd volume of our "Archæologia," I have to remark as follows:—(1.) That the ground in question is destitute of those natural qualifications for the site of a Roman city, or a British fortress, which are found in strong contrast on the other side of the Walbrook;—(2.) That it had no natural boundary or defence *seaward*, in which direction the ground stood somewhat higher than the supposed city, while more advantageous ground was allowed to remain unoccupied to the *westward*;—and (3.) That the thoroughfare crossing it, from north to south, coincides with

the *Bridge*, and with *Roads* which could not have been made until the great lake was drained. For these and other reasons I am confident that the district selected by Mr. Taylor cannot have been the original site of the city, but must have been first inhabited as a *suburb*, and afterwards included in an extension of the limits of the primitive LONDINIUM.

The position of *London-Stone*, within Mr. Taylor's district, seems to afford some justification of his theory; but, at the best, it is situate at or near the *western extremity* of his supposed city, and not in any central place, or one bearing the name or appearance of a *forum*, as he supposes. My method of accounting for its position better consists with my own idea of the primitive city, and with known facts in relation to such a stone: but of this hereafter.

Let me now proceed to state the internal arrangement of LONDINIUM, according to the best view that I am enabled to take, after forty years' consideration of the subject. On

the supposition that it originally occupied the site defined in my former Letter, I may reasonably assume, and I believe it capable of proof, that *the actual streets and ways, which have existed from the most antient times whereof we have any written or traditional evidence, are Roman streets and ways.* For their origin far exceeds in antiquity all such evidence; they well consist with the plan of a Roman city; and there is no evidence to show that the inhabitants, between the Roman and Norman times, were constructors, much less that they were likely to have made much alteration in a city already built, and which they occupied as victorious invaders in search of a good home.

1. The quadrilateral area between the Thames, the Fleet, and the Walbrook, with a foss or *vallum* of some kind on the northern side, is and was traversed by two principal streets nearly parallel to the Thames; viz. (1.) by "Watling Street," from *Dowgate*, to *Ludgate* or *Fleetgate*; (2.) by the Poultry, Chepe, (now Cheapside), and Paternoster Row, from

an *Eastgate* on the Walbrook to an arch still existing in the city-wall at *Amen-Corner*.

2. From north to south the same area is and was traversed by four principal streets or lanes; viz. (1.) by Warwick Lane, Ave-Maria Lane, and Creed Lane, to *Puddle-dock*, near the north of the Fleet; (2.) by Aldersgate Street, St. Martin-le-Grand, and Old Change, to *Lamb-hithe*, now "Lambeth Hill;" (3.) by Wood Street and Bread Street to *Queen-hithe*; (4.) by Coleman Street, Old Jewry, Bucklersbury, Sise Lane, and Tower Royal, to *Dowgate*, near the mouth of the Walbrook. The last of these lines of street is somewhat indirect, for a cause to be stated hereafter; and these lines appear, by their directions, and by significant names, to have had access to the Thames, though I do not insist on this point, as capable of being certainly proved at the present day.

3. Beside those streets, there were other ways, which I believe to have been all or most of the lanes and thoroughfares now existing within the quadrilateral area, ex-

cepting those known to have been altered or constructed within the period of documentary evidence, such as the present lines of St. Paul's Churchyard, Newgate Street, King Street, Queen Street, Cateaton Street, and Cannon Street West.

4. The gates may be supposed, from what I have already stated, to have been as follow: —two westward, viz., *Lud-gate* or *Fleet-gate*, and another, which I will now call *Old Bailey-gate*, though perhaps it was the *Porta Decumana*; two northward, viz., *Aldersgate*, and *Cripplegate* or *Barbican-gate*, the latter then situate where St. Alban's Church now is; two eastward, viz., *Dowgate* and the *East-gate* or *Poultry-gate*; and three *Water-gates* in addition to the principal water-gate, at the junction of Watling Street with the Port of London at Dowgate.

5. You asked me, where I would put the *Forum* in my plan of antient London, since I exclude "*London-Stone*?" I answer, first, that I do not admit *London-Stone* to be a general standard of measurement of distance

from London, or to have any analogy to the golden *milliarium* of the *Forum* at Rome, or to have any connection with a *Forum* at all. It stands, indeed, on a Roman way, but not on or near an intersection of ways; and, if it be a mile-stone, it is only *one* of a long series of such stones. Secondly, I answer, that the place of the London *Forum* is obvious and central, within the site of the original city, which I have proposed for your consideration. The very name exists, and is daily uttered by ten thousand tongues. For what is "Cheapside," but either the northern or the southern footpath of the main street of London, which our forefathers called "CHEPE?" and what is that but the Anglo-Saxon word *ceap*, a *market*? The names of streets and lanes surrounding it are remarkably significant of the use formerly made of this central and widest part of antient London, in which, before the Fire of 1666, the houses stood back, and had their shops projecting toward the street. Here we have the antient traditional names of *Bread Street*, *Milk Street*, *Honey Lane*, and

Wood Street; and here, on its northern side are the remains of a square *market*, the interior area of which is now occupied by the City School, but which you and I well remember as an actual market for fresh provisions. Southward also we find *Fish Street* (though stretching somewhat beyond the limit now discussed); and eastward we have the *Poultry*, and westward were the *Shambles* or Butcher-market, adjacent to that part of the same street, now called Paternoster Row, and *Pannier Alley* for basket-makers, who always accompany a public market. For other traders, dealing in useful commodities, we have still *Ironmonger Lane*; and *Hosier Lane* was the old name of Queen Street, both of them situate in Cheapside. So much for the *Forum* as a place of trade.

6. Not doubting that this primitive city was constructed on the model of a Roman camp, accordingly I find the *Prætorium* at the eastern entrance, and the *Quæstorium* considerably westward from it, but not exposed in an extreme situation; and both are situate on

the Watling Street, having the *Basilica*, or Imperial Court-house, equally distant from both, but placed in the *Forum*. The first of those public buildings I identify in the "Tower Royal" before mentioned; the position of which is on the south side of "Budge Row," (Bridge Row?) and which, as I have before shown, was a tower commanding the port, and the principal entrance to LONDONIUM: it was a royal stronghold in the middle ages, and had its own gates. This I consider to have been the *Prætorium*, before the Tower of London was built, half a mile to the eastward of it.

7. The *Quæstorium*, or public Treasury, was obviously in or near the street yet called "*The Old Change*," and stood, as I believe, at the angle formed by that thoroughfare and the southern side of Watling Street, where the deep excavations made for a large building, now in course of erection, have disclosed massive stone foundations, in a direct line toward Ludgate Street, free from, and therefore correcting, the slight bend made in

Watling Street, toward St. Paul's Churchyard.

8. The *Forum* contained the *Basilica*, as I have said; it still exists under ground, as I propose to show in a future Letter.

9. Within all the quadrangular area that I have described there is not a single garden, except the little space in Stationers' Court. The whole ground was occupied with houses and thoroughfares, before the erection of St. Paul's Cathedral; and even the place of the *Forum* was but an enlargement of the width of a main street. Had a larger space been originally contemplated or selected for the city, it is likely that spaces for gardens, and even for fields, would have been provided, as within the Roman walls and original plan of Chester, the city of the Legion on the Dee, and also within the walls of Norwich. But, *beyond* the area that I have described, and which had its natural boundaries, we find halls and mansions, with spacious gardens, apparently never yet built upon. Nor is there a *burial-ground* within that area, except those

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which are mere *tofts*, having formerly been the sites of churches that were not rebuilt after the Fire. The Cathedral Ground is a special case; it was, in all probability, originally the site of a temple, perhaps also of a theatre; and its space has been amplified by the destruction of streets and houses, within the period of history.

Now, inclose all this area, either in imagination or on paper, with walls, towers, and gates, as suggested in this Letter, and you shall behold a most compact and truly Roman city, in a situation admirably fitted for defence, for commerce, for social and domestic purposes, and for the seat of government, such as cannot be found or constructed elsewhere on the River Thames; and such was the oldest LONDINIUM, at least in the opinion of

Your very humble servant,

W. H BLACK.

LETTER III.

TO WILLIAM TITE, Esq., M.P. &c.

“Principio muros, obscuraque limina portæ,
Qua gressum extuleram, repeto ; et vestigia retro
Observata sequor per noctem.”—VIRG.

DEAR SIR,

Let us now go back into the old city, which we have surveyed from the east bank of the Walbrook. Let us repass the old milestone about 80 yards east of the old city, and enter it through DOWGATE. Having gone over a drawbridge, we immediately find a *curve* in the way: it bends to the northwest, and the massive building on our left is “Tower Royal.” Passing on, we find a crooked lane now called “Sise Lane.” We cannot see its other end, nor, if we go up it, can we see directly into the opposite street, but must turn two sharp corners before we can cross over “Chepe”

into the "Old Jewry." Returning southward, we cannot see from one end to the other of the way that skirts "Tower Royal" on the west, and leads to the southern wall. "Why all these awkward curves?" we ask some of the inhabitants, or casual passers by; but none can tell us the cause. We must then go back in imagination to the primitive state of London society, or visit the antient fortresses of the Romans and Britons; and then we shall find the *constant use of such curves*, in places where security from sudden invasion or attack was required, or in places which might be dangerously exposed to an enemy's missiles if the lines were straight. *They were evidently designed for defence.*

This idea first occurred to me in examining that part of the Roman town of LEWES which lies opposite to the suburb of South-over, is separated from it by a valley and a stream, and is fortified by a high wall midway along the bank. The ground slopes from the wall *downward to the water, and upward to the high street*; but the High Street is covered

from view, and from hostile missiles, by a series of *small lanes*, separating the different burgages, or clusters of houses and grounds, *insulæ* (as the Romans would have called them), or *hagæ* (as the expression is in our Domesday Book), from each other, and giving also access to the battlements of the wall. All these lanes are *narrow*, like "the Rows" in YARMOUTH, and they all have carefully drawn *curves*, the effect of which is to throw obliquely, against the stone walls at the sides of the lanes, any missile that might be shot over the wall with the intention of penetrating to the High Street.

CHESTER again, the streets and ways of which have suffered less alteration than any city in Britain, has not a single antient lane but what is *curved*, so that one end of it cannot be seen from the other. The four principal gates indeed are approached by direct ways, without any bend to cover them; but Pepper-gate, or the postern toward St. John's, is remarkable for its *curved approaches within*. At SORBIODUNUM (or "Old Sarum") the

entrance is protected by bringing the roads together in *external curves* toward the place of the gate, and by erecting opposite to that place a triangular mole, or mound, or barbi-can, which effectually prevents missiles or vision from entering the inclosure. At WINCHESTER, every gate is or was approached by curves.

Like contrivances may be found in many other antient cities of the Roman age; and some of their gates, as in ROME itself, open at a right angle to the wall, requiring those who approach the city to pass directly under the fortifications. Your own VITRUVIUS teaches this as a doctrine of construction. I am inclined to think that Dowgate opened *southward* toward the Thames, and not eastward toward Candlewick Street, the way that leads directly to it. This might have been perceived or ascertained more clearly, than it now can, before the construction of Cannon Street West, a few years ago; and even now the bend in Budge Row would be more intelligible, if we could exactly perceive where

the course of the Walbrook runs, it being now covered over as a sewer.

The curve of "Turnwheel Lane," in a southwestern direction toward the Thames, apparently had a different design. If it were not the original line of Candlewick Street (now Cannon Street) itself, from London-Stone, while the stream of the Walbrook was yet wide and uncovered, then it must have tended downward to the eastern side of the Port of Dowgate, *in a curved line, to relieve or avoid the steep and rapid descent toward the water.*

So I conceive all the "Hills" were designedly curved; partly for the sake of protection to the streets running parallel to the Thames, and partly to break or relieve the steepness, which was much greater before the Fire of London than it is now. Most of those lanes were considerably altered in their level, by the city authorities, soon after the fire; as appears by a remarkable document printed in Maitland's History of London. The steepness was in some instances reduced by as much

as four, five, six, seven, or eight feet; and the subsequent raising of Thames Street, from time to time, has taken off much of their dangerous declivity.

The curves in Bucklersbury and Sise Lane are evidently intended for *military precaution*. Here was no steepness to be avoided. But all the other lanes in the city have curves, even where they run on a *level*. These therefore clearly show a *design*, there being no necessity for them; and there being like curves in all other Britanno-Roman cities and towns in this country. That the design was *military precaution* is infallibly to be inferred from the constant appearance of these *phenomena*, and from their actual effect, since no arrow could be shot from one end of the curved line to the other.

The like may be said of the *want of direct continuation* of one street or lane into another. They are not usually found to match at their opposite extremities, or points of junction with each other, or with a main street which they seem intended to cross. A clear

instance of design of this kind may be perceived in CHESTER, where Bridge Street is at first slightly curved, and then it looks fully up to the north-western corner of Watergate Street, in the stead of looking directly up Northgate Street, in which is the *Forum*. The other main thoroughfare, Watergate Street and Eastgate Street, is not so obstructed: we can look better from one of these into the other. The same contrivance exists at OXFORD. Surely this was a part of the *original plan*, upon which those noble old cities were laid out; for it cannot have happened by accident or inadvertence, then or since. Still less could it be accident, that made much more remarkable curves and breaks in the town and in the ancient city or castle of CAMBRIDGE.

Not having seen these points of Roman engineering treated of in any modern work, yet finding the *oblique entrance* of a city-gate expressly recommended by those great masters, VITRUVIUS and VEGETIUS, I offer these remarks for the consideration of my fellow antiquaries, and of those persons who, with

modern notions, imagine the antients to have been either careless or stupid in the laying out of their thoroughfares, or else lay the blame of crooked lanes and indirect ways to the incroachments and ignorant alterations of a later age.

That they are to be referred to the operation of *settled principles*, and not to blind chance or unknown causes, has become my firm conviction; and the contrary opinion must be henceforth considered a vulgar error. For I undertake to demonstrate those "principles," by the strictest mathematical proofs, in ten thousand instances; of which I shall give examples in a future Letter.

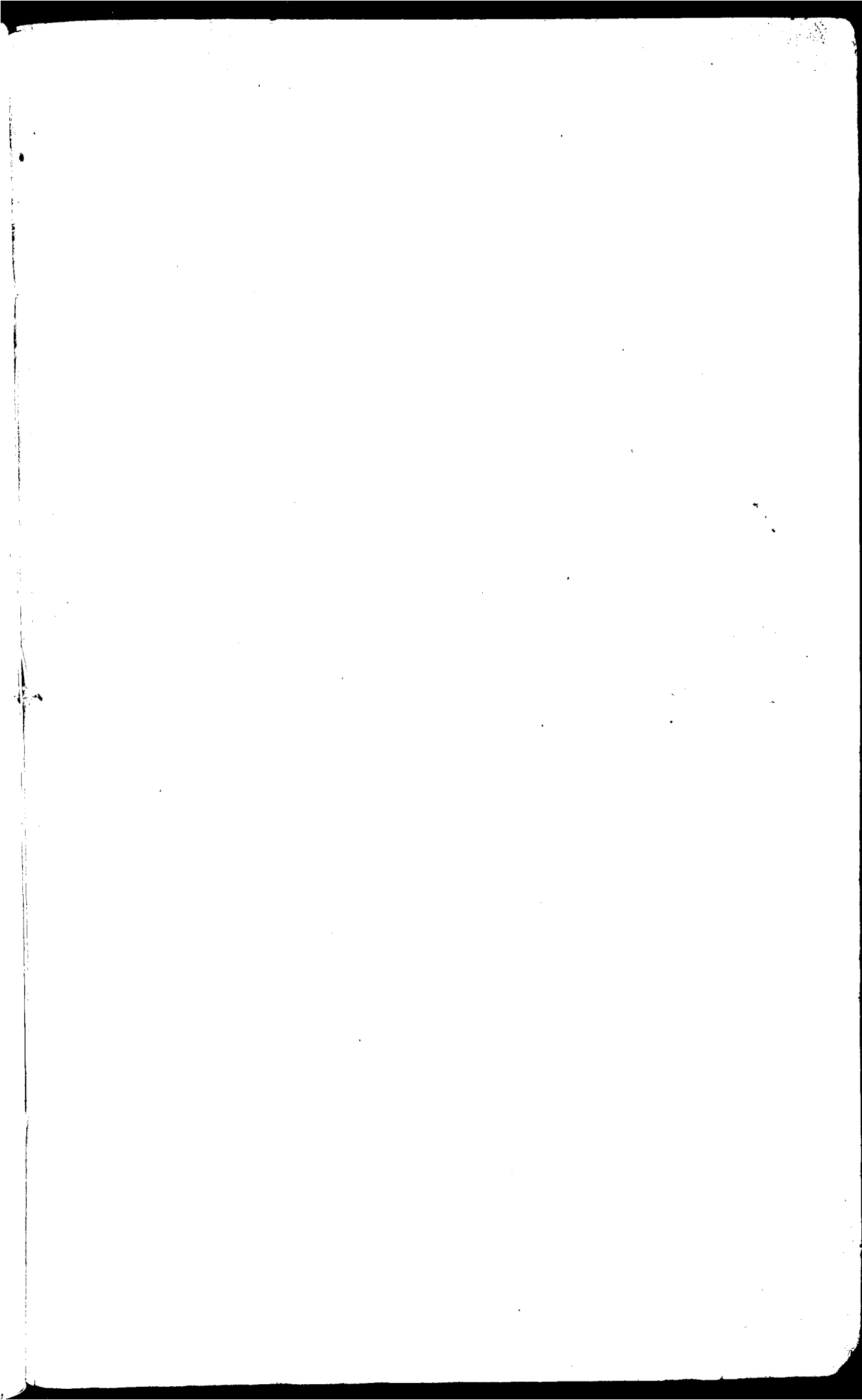
Permit me once more to subscribe myself,

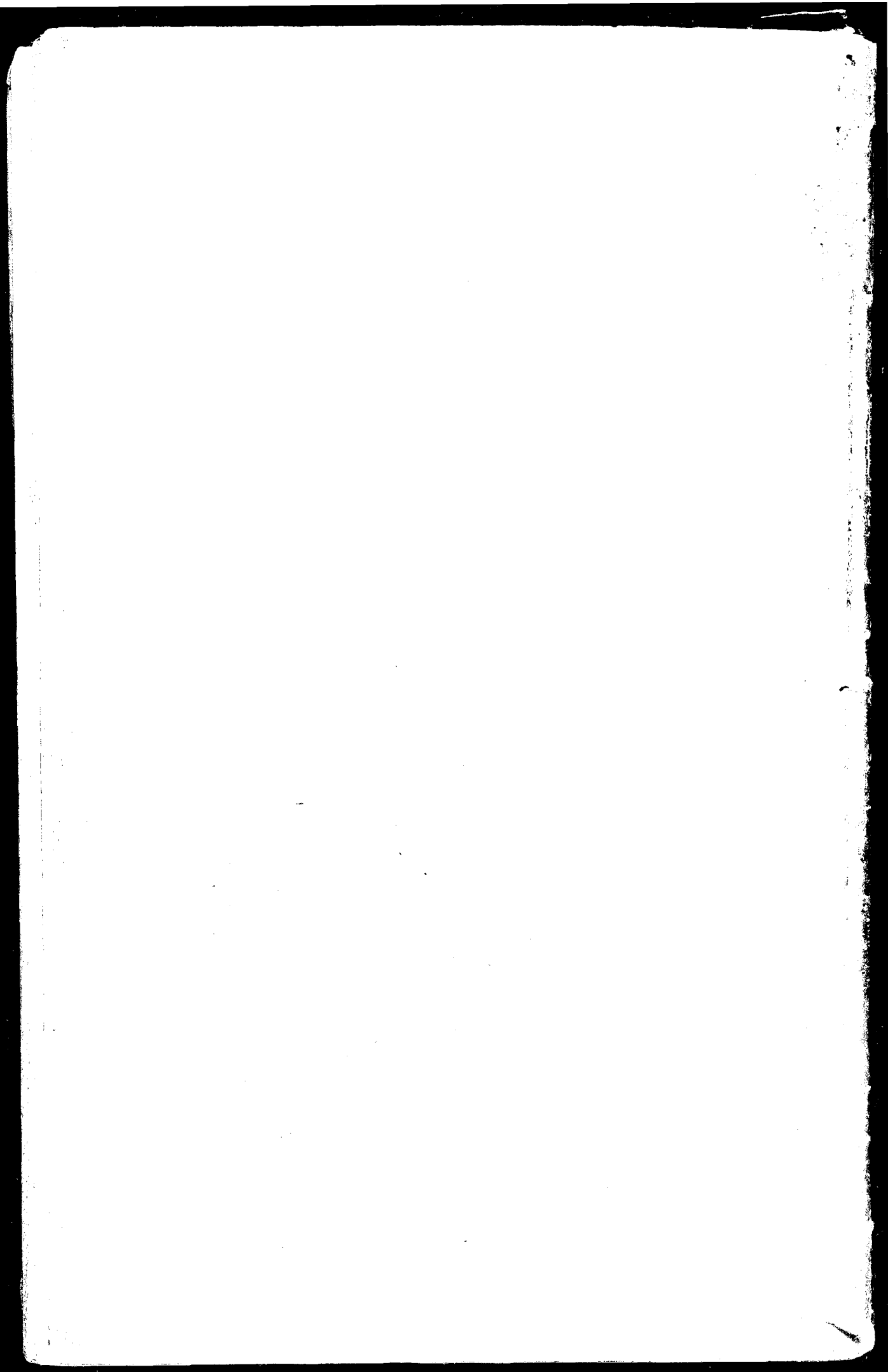
Dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

W. H. BLACK.

(*To be continued.*)





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THE PRIMITIVE SITE
OF
ROMAN LONDON,
&c.

BY W. H. BLACK, F.S.A.

LETTERS I.—III.

PART I.

From the Author.

To Sir Charles Young, Bt. F.R.S.
Garter King of Arms.